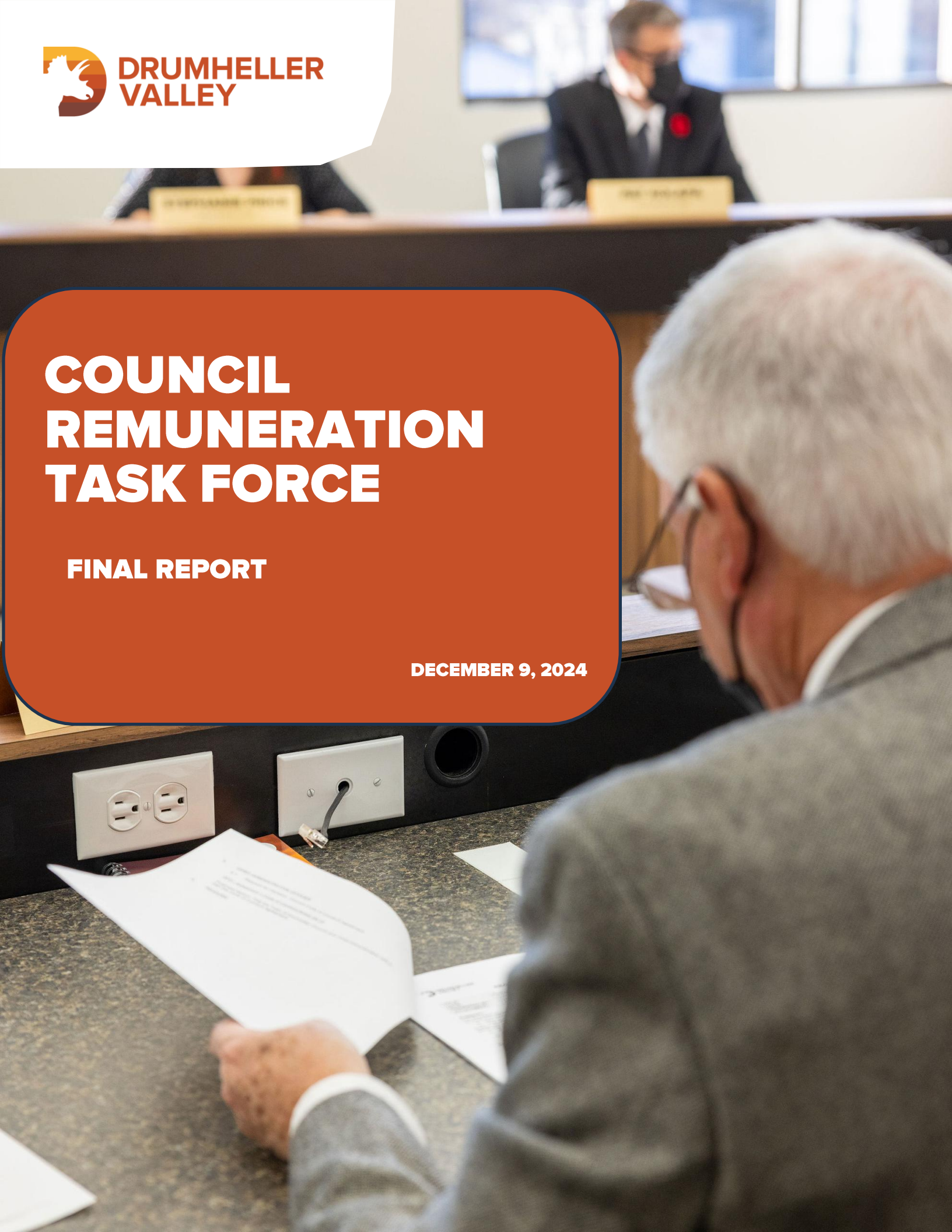


COUNCIL REMUNERATION TASK FORCE

FINAL REPORT

DECEMBER 9, 2024



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2024 Council Remuneration Task Force (CRTF) conducted a comprehensive review of the Town of Drumheller's Council Remuneration and Expense Allowance Policy. Guided by principles of fairness, financial sustainability, and attracting diverse candidates, the CRTF recommends several key updates to align Council remuneration with its responsibilities, community priorities, and best practices.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase Council honorariums by 4% effective January 1, 2025:
- Annual increases be tied to the average negotiated union agreements.

PER DIEM STRUCTURE

Establish three levels of per diems:

- **Per Diem #1** - Conferences & Government Meetings: \$280/day (>4 hours), with rotational Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) conference attendance.
- **Per Diem #2** - Professional Development: \$50/module (max \$500 annually), with increased support in election years and optional group training.
- **Per Diem #3** - Board & Committee Meetings: \$25/meeting (max \$500 annually).

Per diem categories are non-transferable to ensure focus on professional development and meeting attendance.

ALLOWANCES

- Consolidate travel, meal, and accommodation policies into a unified document with a Schedule "A" for streamlined updates.
- Adopt the Government of Alberta reimbursement rate table to align with best practices.
- Simplify claims by instituting "Allowance Without Receipt" for meals and automobile travel.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

- **Childcare Allowance:** Reimburse up to \$1,000 annually for reasonable childcare expenses related to official duties.
- **Wellness Spending Account:** Provide \$500 annually per Council member, in line with Town of Drumheller employee benefits.
- **Professional Development Budget:** Establish a \$10,000 annual budget for Council as a whole.

POLICY STREAMLINING

- Create an addendum to the policy (Schedule "A") to centralize frequently updated information, reducing the need for annual policy revisions.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

While beyond its terms of reference, the CRTF also suggests:

- Developing a mentorship program for new Council members.
- Creating a Roles and Responsibilities document for potential candidates.
- Establishing a Board and Committee meeting matrix for workload equity.

These recommendations ensure fair and transparent compensation while enhancing Council's capacity to serve the unique needs of the Town of Drumheller.

CONSIDERATIONS

The following information is the product of the review of the Town of Drumheller 2024 Council Remuneration Task Force (CRTF). After reviewing factors and information relating to Council’s role and responsibilities, this written report outlines suggestions for changes to the Remuneration and Expenses Allowance for Mayor and Council policy. The Task Force was guided by the following:

- That there be adequate compensation reflective of the responsibilities, time commitment, and accountability associated with the positions.
- That remuneration reflects the Town’s financial and strategic priorities.
- That remuneration provides adequate compensation to attract a range of candidates reflecting a broad representation of the community.

The recommendations and considerations presented in this report are based on the CRTF's research into the remuneration and expense policies of other municipalities, established best practices, feedback obtained from a survey distributed to current Council members, and insights from the personal and professional experiences of CRTF members.

COUNCIL HONORARIUM

The Honorarium remuneration would include items currently covered in Policy, plus:

- Committee of the Whole meetings
- Voluntary events where Council members are invited to attend but not required to do so
- Committee meetings of a temporary Task Force (<1 year in duration)

	Effective Date	Mayor	Councillor
Current	January 1, 2024	\$47, 831.16	\$25,060.88
*Proposed	January 1, 2025	\$49,744.41	\$26,063.32
<i>* Reflects a 4% increase.</i>			

For service beginning January 1, 2026, Mayor and Council shall receive annual increases as established in policy, based on the average of the negotiated union agreements for CUPE Local 4604 and 135.

Rationale:

When comparing the remuneration of Council members to those of communities similar in size to Drumheller, it is essential to consider the unique characteristics of Drumheller, particularly its developing tourist industry. As the third most popular tourist destination in Alberta, Drumheller faces a distinct set of challenges and opportunities that require careful management by Council. Both positive and negative community issues arise from this status, necessitating additional oversight and attention from our leadership.

PER DIEM

CURRENT POLICY & BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Current:

- \$260 per diem per full day, i.e., >4 continuous hours
- A per diem of up to seven (7) days annually per Councillor and twelve (12) days annually for the Mayor.
- Two (2) additional per diems per elected official designated for training in an election year.
- Expenses incurred and per diems requested by Council in relation to conferences, conventions, and courses are only eligible for reimbursement/payment once a report to Council has been presented.

Background:

- Elected Officials Education Program (EOEP) training was free last year, and Council submitted per diem claims for 4+ hours of training and were reimbursed for travel expenses.
- Current EOEP training sessions are \$395.00 (in-person) or \$295.00 (online) per person

The CRTF is proposing changes to the per diem structure of remuneration as follows:

PER DIEM #1: CONFERENCES, CONVENTIONS, AND GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

- Increase to \$280/day (4+ continuous hours)
- Eliminate the provision for additional per diems allotted in the first year following the election.
- Councillors attend the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) conference on a rotational basis, once per term, due to the high costs of attending the conference. Where travel savings are significant due to location of the conference, the Mayor and additional Councillors may attend if pre-approved in an open session of Council.

PER DIEM #2: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Allow per diem claims of \$50 for each online course module completed, recognizing a person's time devoted to training, (e.g., EOEP, LinkedIn Learning subscription), to a maximum of \$500.00 (up to \$800.00 in the first year of a Council term) annually per person.

PER DIEM #3: BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- Meetings are defined as those attended by appointed Council members (or alternates) with mandatory attendance; voluntary attendance by Councillors not appointed are ineligible for claim.
- \$25.00 per meeting to a maximum of \$500 annually per person (i.e., 20 meetings).

PER DIEMS ARE NOT TRANSFERABLE ACROSS CATEGORIES

The categories are designed to incentivize conference attendance and professional development training to support the work of Council. The Board and Committee Meeting per diem is designed to compensate the Mayor and Councillors for their individual appointments.

ALLOWANCES

TRAVEL, MEALS & ACCOMMODATION

The following active policies for Mayor and Council have inconsistencies that contradict each other for Travel & Subsistence per diem reimbursement amounts:

- Policy C-2-00 – Conference Attendance
- Policy C-06-04 – Travel Expenses
- Policy C-06-22 – Remuneration and Expense Allowance for Mayor and Council

The CRTF recognizes the value in reviewing these policies with the aim of consolidating them into a single policy and including a Schedule “A” addendum as referenced later in this document. This process would address redundancies, resolve contradictions, and clarify terminology.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

ELIMINATE MAYOR’S DISCRETIONARY FUND

During their research, the CRTF identified several concerns regarding the transparency and availability of information related to the usage of this fund. They noted that both the Mayor and Administration share in the allocation of expenses to this fund. Moreover, it appears that newly elected mayors may not be adequately informed about the fund's existence. These issues suggest that other budget categories may be more suitable for the types of expenditures currently documented in this area. Additionally, the fund's name may create potential challenges, as it could attract scrutiny and discussion regarding the Mayor's decisions and fund allocations.

INCLUDE A WELLNESS SPENDING ACCOUNT FOR COUNCIL

The CRTF recommends that Council receive the same wellness benefit that Town of Drumheller employees receive (\$500.00 per person annually), as outlined in Policy HR-A-02 – Wellness Spending Account.

ESTABLISH A COUNCIL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ALLOWANCE

The CRTF defines professional development as various learning opportunities with a primary focus on local government, which includes but is not limited to, study tours, seminars, courses, coaching, and mentoring.

Within this context, the CRTF recommends establishing an annual budget of \$10,000 for professional development for the Council as a whole (not per person), in addition to the existing Travel & Subsistence budget.

The CRTF further recommends hosting in-person or online group training, e.g., EOEP, conflict resolution, mental health, etc.

Claims for Per Diem #2 – Professional Development would not be expensed against this allowance.

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CREATE CHILDCARE EXPENSES ALLOWANCE

The CRTF recommends that Council be reimbursed annually per person for reasonable childcare expenses incurred when attending meetings, professional development, conferences, conventions, or seminars in an official capacity.

Claims under this allowance are permitted:

- according to maximums as set out in a separate schedule attached to the policy, (i.e., Schedule “A”). The CRTF recommends an annual maximum of \$1,000.
- according to the separate schedule which allows for submission of receipts from licensed daycare providers and day homes, and “Allowance Without Receipt” for other common childcare options (e.g., babysitters, family, and friends).
- solely for childcare expenses related to children under the age of 12.
- only where alternate arrangements cannot be made.

Rationale:

One of our previously established objectives is to develop recommendations that ensure competitive compensation, thereby attracting a diverse range of candidates that reflect the broader community. This allowance may incentivize a segment of the community that typically does not consider commitments or involvement of this nature.

ESTABLISH A SEPARATE SCHEDULE ATTACHED TO THE POLICY

The CRTF recommends:

- to streamline policy reviews, day-to-day procedural items be addressed through a schedule attached to the policy (referred to as Schedule “A”), which will consolidate frequently changing information such as annual allowance maximums, per diem amounts, honorariums, references to municipal, provincial, and federal schedules, and specify which expenses necessitate the submission of a receipt.
- integrating into the schedule the Government of Alberta (GOA) Appendix A - Travel & Meal Reimbursement and Allowance Rate table, included at the end of this document.

This approach ensures all relevant and frequently used information is centralized for easy reference and reduces the need for annual policy revisions.

The GOA appendix:

- delineates the allowances applicable for each calendar year and is usually published in early December, coming into effect for the following year.
- accommodates "Reimbursement With Receipt" and "Allowance Without Receipt" allowances, similar to the Town's approach.
- eliminates the need for ongoing reviews while keeping values current yet allows for reimbursement amounts to be revised as needed.
- provides for the reimbursement of actual accommodation costs upon the submission of receipts.
- Allows per diem claims for private accommodations to be submitted without receipts. Claims for private accommodations are accepted when Council members stay with friends or family while traveling on Town business.

The CRTF also recommends "Allowance Without Receipt" as the **sole option** for automobile travel and meals, simplifying the claim process for Council and Administration.

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Note: Other allowances named in the current policies listed above have not been amended (i.e., travel other than by automobile, taxi, parking, personal cell phone, and office supplies).

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

While conducting their research, the CRTF noted other considerations that, while not within the scope of the CRTF terms of reference, would be a valuable addition for Council and Administration to consider:

- A well-structured mentorship plan could serve as a valuable resource in supporting newly elected members in their roles on the Town Council.
- It would be beneficial to develop a Roles and Responsibilities Document for individuals interested in running for office before the election.
- Development of a matrix of Board and Committees to clearly outline the number of meetings each board holds annually would facilitate the equitable distribution of workload associated with Council member appointments.



APPENDIX A

Travel and Meal Reimbursement and Allowance Rates
Effective December 1, 2023

Expense Type	Section Reference	Reimbursement with Receipt	Allowance without Receipt
Claimable Travel Expenses Without a Receipt	7(2)	N/A	\$12.75
Private Vehicle Mileage Allowance	8(14)(a)	N/A	\$0.550 per kilometre travelled
Daily Vehicle Allowance	8(14)(b)	N/A	\$10.25 per day
Adverse Driving Condition Allowance	8(14)(c)	N/A	\$8.55 per day
Other Use of Private Vehicle	8(14)(d)	N/A	\$0.165 per kilometre
Travel to Selection Panels	8(15)	Per general rules of reimbursement	\$0.165 per kilometre
Business Insurance	8(17)	\$500 per year Maximum	N/A
Meals in Canada			
Breakfast	9(2)	N/A	\$13.00
Lunch	9(2)	N/A	\$17.00
Dinner	9(2)	N/A	\$27.00
Meals Outside of Canada	9(2)	N/A	Per Appendices C and D of the National Joint Council Travel Policy, as amended from time to time
Accommodation	9(7)	Actual expense	\$20.15
Personal	9(8)	N/A	\$7.35 in Canada \$14.65 outside of Canada
Overtime Meals	10(1)	Actual expense up to \$10.35	N/A